



# Houston District Success Stories

Success Stories Written by, [Valerie Nguyen](#) the Public Information Officer

## *ABC reels 'em in again with the help of SBA*



They say out of every tragedy something good comes. This certainly is the case for ABC Seafood, Inc. In late 1983, on the heels of Hurricane Alicia, ABC Seafood, Inc. was open for business. Family owned & operated, this seafood market is very familiar with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). ABC Seafood, Inc. opened its doors with the assistance of an SBA loan in 1983, had a change of ownership via an SBA guaranty loan in 2003, and now has assistance from the SBA Disaster Assistance Office for damages sustained from Hurricane Rita.

Due to power outages caused by Hurricane Rita, ABC Seafood, Inc. lost their inventory and a freezer. For a retail seafood market, the inventory is the life support of the business. Business owner, Kevin Lou, purchased the business from his sister who had inherited the business from her father-in-law. Kevin worked for his sister for five years before purchasing the business in 2003.

ABC Seafood, Inc. was approved for an SBA disaster assistance program loan to replace the lost inventory and freezer and for working capital. In an attempt to assist victims of hurricanes Katrina, Rita, & Wilma, SBA increased the maximum disbursement amount prior to the recordation of liens from \$10,000.00 to \$50,000. ABC Seafood was able to take advantage of this increase.

In addition, the three recent hurricanes that ravaged the Gulf Coast communities left many shrimp docks and fish houses destroyed or out of business, leaving ABC Seafood, Inc. with few vendors to replenish its inventory. Aside from the damages caused by the hurricanes, the high cost of fuel and large volume of imported shrimp has also hurt the industry and has affected the shrimping communities throughout the country. Competitors, such as Wal-mart & HEB who now carry Gulf seafood, have made business worse for Kevin Lou. Despite many struggles and challenges, Kevin is determined to strive and succeed by providing superior quality seafood to his customers.

Most of ABC Seafood, Inc.'s customers are from the surrounding Seabrook areas and Houston, with some of the inventory supplied to restaurants in Kemah and local hotels. Because of the nature of the business, Kevin Lou said, "its hard work, working 7 days a week." They are open everyday from 8am-6pm. Located at 302 Waterfront Drive in Seabrook, Texas, it is an ideal location for a seafood market.

When asked about taking preventative measures for this year's hurricane season, Kevin Lou says he only buys a maximum of seven to ten days worth of fresh seafood at a time. He does not stock inventory until December and January, after the hurricane season. Moreover, Kevin has a freezer truck to transport his inventory if necessary.

With the 2006 hurricane season already upon us, the SBA is urging everyone to take necessary steps to protect their lives and property. Preparedness tips for businesses, homeowners, and renters are available on the SBA's Web site at [www.sba.gov/disaster\\_recov/prepared/getready.html](http://www.sba.gov/disaster_recov/prepared/getready.html). The federal government's preparedness Web site [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) is another helpful resource.

## ***"Dealership gets Rollin' with SBA Disaster Assistance"***



Mike Young has been in the auto industry all his life, born and raised in Port Arthur, Texas, he started selling used cars in 1980. He and his partner purchased Keating Chevrolet in 1999, but in 2004, Mike bought out his partner and now operates the business under Mike Young Motor Company, which is located at 2121 Gulfway Drive, Winnie, TX 77665. The dealership's inventory consists of Chevrolet, Chrysler, Dodge, & Jeep vehicles.

Mike Young believes in giving back to the community that has supported him through the years and his support of many local organizations such as, Muscular Dystrophy Association, Relay for Life, Baseball League, & Cattlemen's Association, proves the point.

Just as any small business owner would agree, running your own business is hard work. As Mike stated "Being a business owner is rewarding but it's a full time job, and you're the first one in the office and the last to leave." A successful business stems from the support of its employees and Mike believes in "surrounding himself with the right people." Mike Young Motor Company employed over 40 employees before Hurricane Rita, but due to hurricane damages, the number of employees has temporarily dropped to 25.

When Mike Young evacuated to Shreveport, Louisiana, he heard about FEMA & SBA and immediately applied for assistance. Mike Young Motor Company sustained structural damages to the body shop and service department, as well as substantial damages to the inventory. Upon receipt of the application in October 2005, the SBA approved a loan for Keating Chevrolet d/b/a Mike Young Motor Company on December 22, 2005. The loan proceeds were disbursed in January 2006 to repair/replace inventory, machinery & equipment, and furniture & fixtures. With the assistance of the SBA Disaster Program, Mike Young Motor Company was able to re-open its doors to service the local community as well as the surrounding communities of Beaumont, Nederland, Vidor, Port Neches, & Lumberton. He hopes to have another franchise in the future and plans to utilize SBA's conventional programs for the expansion.

SBA has approved over \$2 billion in disaster loans to 20,482 businesses affected by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita & Wilma. In addition to the disaster recovery loans, more than 3,635 loans totaling \$685 million have been made to small businesses in the affected areas through SBA's two conventional business loan programs: the 7(a) general business loan guarantee program and the 504 Certified Development Company loan program.

For information on SBA's disaster assistance programs, please visit [www.sba.gov/disaster](http://www.sba.gov/disaster). For information on SBA's conventional business loan programs, please visit [www.sba.gov/financing](http://www.sba.gov/financing).

## **Is your business successful? Would you like to take advantage of our free marketing services?**

In our efforts to assist small businesses and recognize their achievements the Houston District Office features several success stories on our website. The small business success stories are selected by the district office, and represent small businesses that have received services from SBA and/or our Resource Partners.

All success stories are entered into our Washington database; some are featured in our SBA Houston e-Newsletters, others are submitted to local newspapers, associations, chambers of commerce, and community newsletters for publication.

To qualify for consideration a Small business(s) must meet the following criteria:

1. Receive assistance from SBA or a Resource Partners, i.e., Lenders, SCORE, Small Business Development Centers (SBDC's)
2. Must be in business minimum of two years
3. Owner must sign Consent Form allowing SBA to feature your business.

The SBA Houston District Office selects twenty-five small businesses each fiscal year.

If you would like our district office to consider your business for a small business success story please contact our Public Information Officer at 713-773-6527 or email at [neal.blanton@sba.gov](mailto:neal.blanton@sba.gov). Please note some small businesses may also be included in public officials' speeches.